



## LEARNER INDISCIPLINE: THE CASE OF AN ACADEMY (FORMERLY NATIONAL STATE COLLEGE) IN MAURITIUS<sup>i</sup>

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### Abstract:

Student indiscipline is a school phenomenon that is hampering the academic mission of the school. The aim of this study was to identify the main forms of indiscipline, examine the major causes of student indiscipline and investigate into the current disciplinary strategies that are adopted by the school administrator of the selected Academy. The Academy is a state-owned secondary school that admits students of the last three years of secondary school education. A mixed-approach research design was used for data collection. A questionnaire was used with 56 teachers. A semi-unstructured interview was conducted with the school administrator and a focus group interview with 6 students. The purposive sampling technique was used for the selection of respondents and participants in the research setting. The findings of the study showed that the main forms of manifestations are leaving the school premises without official permission, fighting, sexual harassment against female staff, lateness to school, use of foul language and truancy. The main causes of indiscipline are school- and family-related. The current strategies adopted by the school administrator of the Academy are school community service, teachers' engagement in discipline management, moral punishment, the use of disciplinary cards, and strong leadership from the school administrator. The findings call for a shift in the approach of student discipline management, from the restorative and reactive approach to the humanistic and democratic approach to discipline, which considers the student as part of the solution, not as the problem.

**Keywords:** student indiscipline, Academy, secondary school, humanistic, democratic approach

<sup>i</sup> L'INDISCIPLINE DES APPRENANTS: LE CAS D'UNE ACADEMIE (ANCIENNE COLLEGE D'ETAT NATIONAL) A L'ILE MAURICE

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**Abstract:**

L'indiscipline des élèves est un phénomène scolaire qui entrave la mission académique de l'école. Le but de cette étude était d'identifier les principales formes d'indiscipline, d'examiner les principales causes de l'indiscipline des élèves et d'enquêter sur les stratégies disciplinaires actuelles adoptées par l'administrateur de l'école de l'Académie sélectionnée. L'Académie est une école secondaire publique qui accueille les élèves des trois dernières années de l'enseignement secondaire. Un plan de recherche à approche mixte a été utilisé pour la collecte de données. Un questionnaire a été utilisé auprès de 56 enseignants. Une entrevue semi-non structurée a été menée avec l'administrateur de l'école et une entrevue de groupe de discussion avec 6 élèves. La technique d'échantillonnage raisonné a été utilisée pour la sélection des répondants et des participants dans le cadre de la recherche. Les résultats de l'étude ont montré que les principales formes de manifestations quittent les locaux de l'école sans autorisation officielle, les combats, le harcèlement sexuel contre le personnel féminin, le retard à l'école, l'utilisation d'un langage grossier et l'absentéisme. Les principales causes d'indiscipline sont liées à l'école et à la famille. Les stratégies actuelles adoptées par l'administrateur de l'école sont le service communautaire scolaire, l'engagement des enseignants dans la gestion de la discipline, les sanctions morales, l'utilisation de cartes disciplinaires et un solide leadership de l'administrateur de l'école. Les résultats appellent à un changement dans l'approche de la gestion de la discipline des étudiants, de l'approche réparatrice et réactive à l'approche humaniste et démocratique de la discipline, qui considère l'étudiant comme faisant partie de la solution et non comme le problème.

**Mots-clés:** indiscipline scolaire, Académie, lycée, humaniste, approche démocratique

## 1. Introduction

A school is considered as a place where students get the opportunity to learn, develop and grow so that they become responsible citizens of tomorrow. The behaviour problems, low performance and poor development among students remain a concern for educators, school administrators, and parents and to improve academic performance, it is essential to establish and maintain effective discipline and safe learning environment (Ehiane, 2014). During the last decade, schools have faced increased pressures to change and adapt. Schools can no longer simply react to changes in society, but they also need to be developed in an active and conscious way, and this has had an impact on the duties of the school administrators. The responsibilities of school administrators have expanded and their work profiles have become more complex (Pont, Nusche & Moorman, 2008).

Mauritius is not alone in experiencing discipline problems in schools. Even the European countries are undergoing the stress to find solutions to deal with the discipline problems. According to Durgahee (2014), about 1000 students in Mauritius were suspended from school for abuse and assault in a school day, during 2013; there have

been 44 major assaults on staff, having to be rushed to hospitals with serious injuries; in one of four schools, false allegations have been made against staff by students, and in one of six schools, an allegation made by a member of a student's family, two-thirds of the teachers feel bad behaviour is driving professionals out of the classroom.

The problem of indiscipline has reached an unprecedented level of concern for all stakeholders. The local Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology, Mrs. Dookhun-Lutchmun, confirmed that the cases of indiscipline are increasing very fast and they are having a negative impact on the academic performance of students. Stakeholders are playing the 'blame game' while some blame the effects of the westernisation of the Mauritian society. Many people complained that students frequently fight at bus stations and other public places without worrying about the consequences (L'Express, 2015).

The main purpose of any school is to provide such educational foundations which allow students to build a successful independent life, but the problems of discipline in schools cause barriers to students' success. Maintaining school discipline by the school administrator is important to create an effective teaching and learning environment. Problems of indiscipline are becoming a major issue in secondary schools, making the tasks of educational administrators and educational leaders more difficult.

Most school administrators spend much time dealing with the school discipline and behaviour (Meador, 2017); while there is no such way where the school rector can eliminate the discipline problem. School administrators have to seek the assistance and cooperation of the school community and other stakeholders to improve discipline among learners. School administration should have management systems to ensure effective teaching and learning, and schools should be able to establish a suitable atmosphere needed for curriculum delivery in school.

Clark (2001) asserted that structural leadership changes should be instigated that involve teachers, students and parents (Parents-Teachers Association) for meaningful decision making in order to improve discipline in school. Rules and regulations should be formulated in close consultations with all the stakeholders of the school so that shared responsibility can be assumed and effective ideas can be generated while preparing the rules and regulations of the school regarding discipline.

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources (2010) maintained that the school administrator should encourage responsible behaviour and provide all students with a satisfying and fruitful school experience that would discourage misconduct. School discipline has three main objectives, as stipulated in the School Management Manual, first, to ensure the safety of staff and students; second, to create an environment conducive to learning; and thirdly, to contribute to the social development of the student. Empowered by the Education Act (1957), the school administrator is responsible for maintaining discipline and to make such rules for the administration and discipline of the school.

The school superintendent also has an important role to play in maintaining and improving discipline at school. He is responsible to handle the administrative routines in

maintaining and improving discipline at school such as issuing forms for Saturday arrest, informing parents about their ward's misbehaviour, disciplining students on lateness, shirking of classes, absences, among others. Above all the school superintendent is responsible to support the school administrator in maintaining discipline both inside and outside the school premises.

## **2. Literature Review**

The concept of student indiscipline has been widely studied in many contexts, and mostly in the context of secondary schools. A review of the literature would allow the reader to have better insights into this complex school phenomenon.

In a descriptive research design study carried out in 17 government-owned secondary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria, Ali, Dada, Isiaka and Salomon (2014) found that there was no significance between the administrators', teachers' and students' views and attitudes and the acts of indiscipline manifested by the latter. The management styles of the school administrators had a significant impact on the prevalence of indiscipline. However, expulsion, corporal punishment, verbal reprim and smacking had no effect on reducing the manifestation of acts of indiscipline such as bullying, truancy, absenteeism, vandalism of school properties, thefts and fighting. They suggested that the democratic management style by the school administrator, the identification of early manifestations of indiscipline and the whole-school approach should be adopted to control discipline among students. Punitive discipline measures such as corporal punishment and expulsion should not be used. A more recent study in Enugu state, in Nigeria, by Ndubuisi (2018) found the main acts of indiscipline as defiance of school authority, class disruptions, truancy, fighting, use of profanity, theft, examination malpractice, and leaving campus without permission. They suggested as discipline strategies adequate facilities for teaching and learning; parents and teachers should show good examples to students; moral punishment, rewards, praise and blame create room for reinforcement of positive performance; schools should abolish harsh rules and regulations, and parents should give their children the necessary home training.

In a mixed-methods study carried out in Mauritius in twelve selected secondary schools of three categories, namely private schools, Mahatma Gandhi schools and state secondary schools, Beebeejaun-Muslum (2014) found that the main antisocial behaviour among students were using foul language, smoking and drinking alcohol in schools, destroying school properties, and physical aggression. It was also found that boys were more indisciplined than girls and that discipline was more a problem in urban schools than those in rural areas. She argued that the family background, students' free access to social media and pornographic materials, lack of professionalism from newly recruited teachers, parents' lack of responsibility towards their children's education were the main reasons for indiscipline. She found that the measures that school administrators were adopting were the intervention of the disciplinary committee, rustication for the undisciplined student, parent conferencing as well as the intervention of the "Brigade des

Mineurs” which undergoes “crackdown” operations in suspicious places where students play truancy.

In another qualitative study carried out in Mauritius by Belle (2016) in selected state secondary schools in Mauritius, it was found that students took synthetic drugs and Gandia on the school premises, they damaged the school properties, they watched pornographic films, students of upper classes bullied the young students, use of graffiti on the school walls, scribbling teachers' cars which were in the school park. The main causes of indiscipline were the family, the students' attitudes towards schooling, the teachers' attitudes towards discipline management, private tuition, the political interference of parents in the administrator's execution of the school disciplinary policy and measures, the lack of authority of school administrators to implement disciplinary measures in their schools, lack of extracurricular activities, and the lengthy discipline protocol imposed by the Ministry to report discipline problems. Belle (2016) proposed a whole-school discipline management model to address the problem. This model involves all the school stakeholders, including social workers, public health officers and educational psychologists to be involved in the successful implementation of preventive, interventionist and restorative strategies to address the problem in state secondary schools.

Ponfua (2015) conducted a quantitative research design survey in secondary schools in four regions in Cameroon and he found that students manifest a lack of discipline in the following ways: assault and insult on teachers, cultism, vandalism, examination malpractice, fighting, drug abuse and alcoholism and idleness. Students showed unacceptable behaviours because of harsh school rules and regulations, poor leadership of some school administrators, lack of extracurricular activities, poor teaching techniques, teacher absenteeism and overcrowded classes, poor value system, parental overprotection, parental rejection and unsatisfactory home conditions. The possible solutions to indiscipline in Cameroon were moral leadership and education, provision of adequate facilities for teaching, sports and games, the involvement of students in the drafting of discipline rules and regulations, a smaller class size, value re-orientation, emphasis on extracurricular activities, positive student-teacher relationships, more effective parental and school supervision and counselling.

In a descriptive survey design study carried out by Mwaniki (2018) in Kenya, it was found that the main manifestations of indiscipline among learners were sneaking, drug abuse, vernacular speaking, truancy, thefts, bullying of weak students, forgery and failing to do the assignment. The various causes identified, from the perspectives of the school administrators of the selected twelve schools, were poor student-teacher relationships, poor teaching, lack of facilities and over-protective guardians. A participatory approach to discipline management was proposed to address the problem from its roots.

### 3. Objectives of the study

The main aim of the study was to examine the manifestations of indiscipline, the causes and the possible discipline strategies that the school administrator adopts in an Academy in Mauritius.

The research objectives of this study were:

- 1) To identify the manifestations of disciplinary problems that are being experienced in the selected Academy?
- 2) To examine the main causes of disciplinary problems in such a school?
- 3) To investigate the strategies that are being adopted by the school administrator to manage and improve disciplinary problems in the school?

### 4. Research methodology

The mixed-methods research design was used to collect data about the problem of discipline among students in the selected Academy. This mixed-methods approach was adopted for this study since it provides a better understanding of the discipline problem which is becoming a complex public health problem among adolescents. The discipline problem can better be understood by triangulating one set of results with another, and this allows to enhance the validity of inferences (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). Questionnaires and focus group discussions (FGD) were used for this purpose. The purposive sampling technique was used to select the respondents and the participants.

The questionnaire was administered online and sent to each of the 56 teachers out whom 45 teachers accepted to answer all the research questions on the questionnaire. Qualitative information was gathered through the focus group interviews. Six students of each upper form were interviewed and they voiced their opinions regarding the management of discipline problems in the school. The school administrator was also interviewed to get answers about his management strategies. Data was also collected through document analysis, namely the students' special report form book and the school superintendent disciplinary book which records all the data relating to discipline problems in the school. The disciplinary card, in the possession of teachers, was also analysed.

A pilot test was undertaken to validate the instruments. The data collected through the questionnaire were analysed through the SPSS. There was a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.955, which showed the reliability of the data collected in the questionnaire. The qualitative data was analysed by following the five-step procedures proposed by Thomas (2006):

- 1) preparation of raw data files,
- 2) close reading of the transcribed text,
- 3) creation of categories,
- 4) overlapping coding and uncoded text,
- 5) continuing revision and refinement of the category system.

Member checking was used after the final report on the data. Though the purpose of the study was not to generalise the findings since the study was context-bound, yet the transferability of the findings may be possible. The study allowed the readers to have sufficient information about the characteristics of the selected respondents and participants, and the natural setting of the study so that they may experience a congruence of their setting, features, and experiences with those found in this study. Ethics were considered in accordance with the Mauritius Data Protection Act (2017). It ensured that the rights of the participants, including anonymity and confidentiality, are protected.

The Academy is a government-owned secondary school other than a Regional School, which provides education as from Grade 10 to Grade 13. Admission to such a school is done on a national basis, that is it admits students irrespective of the geographical zone in which they reside (Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology, 2020). It was previously known as a National State College, which was admitting the best performing students in the Certificate of Primary Education examinations. There are only twelve such schools. Such a type of secondary school is new in the context of the current Nine Year Continuous Basic Education reform in the country. The selected Academy for this study is located in the rural area, and it is considered as the best performing school in the Educational Zone 2.

## 5. Research findings and discussion

### 5.1 Common manifestations of student indiscipline

The Relative Importance Index was used to identify the main manifestations of learner indiscipline among students:

$$RII = \frac{\sum W}{A \cdot N} (0 \leq RII \leq 1) \quad (2)$$

Where:

W – is the weight given to each factor by the respondents and ranges from 1 to 5, (where “1” is “strongly disagree” and “5” is “strongly agree”);

A – is the highest weight (i.e. 5 in this case) and;

N – is the total number of respondents.

The results are depicted in the table below:

**Table 1:** The main forms of manifestation of indiscipline

Question Number	Statement	$\Sigma W$	A*N	RII	Ranking
9.	Learners often leave the school premises without permission.	54	45	1.2	1
5.	Students fight a lot on the school premises.	54	45	1.2	1
1.	Sexual harassment against female teachers is common among students.	54	45	1.2	1
7.	Students are often late for school.	72	45	1.6	4
2.	Students often use foul language among themselves and even with some teachers	79	45	1.75	5
10.	Truancy happens frequently in the school.	93	45	2.07	6

## 5.2 Causes of learner indiscipline

The findings from the questionnaire, the FGD with students and the individual interview with the administrator are discussed in the following section. The main causes of student indiscipline in the Academy are broken homes, strict school rules and regulations, the state of poverty in the family, the acquisition of negative information in the digital media, and the peer pressure group.

### 5.2.1 Broken homes

The majority of the respondents in the questionnaire agreed that broken homes constitute the main cause of learner indiscipline, while only 20% of the respondents disagreed that they can be a major cause of the disciplinary problem at school. In the focus group interview, all the interviewees supported the finding from the questionnaire. In the same vein, the school administrator pointed out:

*“Most of the times when we call the responsible parties of the defaulters, we come to know that these students are mostly from broken homes family. These students try to show their frustrations towards their families and the school authorities”.*

This finding is also supported by Ofori, Tordzro, Asamoah and Achiaa (2018) who found that the broken family is the principal cause of learner indiscipline in Ghana.

### 5.2.2 Strict school rules and regulations

Out of 45 teachers, only 22.2% agreed that the school rules and regulations were too strict, and these rules and regulations encourage the students to get involved into truancy acts, while 33.3% of the teachers strongly disagreed. The latter are mostly from the age group of 36 to 55, with a working experience of more than 10 years. The interviewees in the focus group interview were of the view that students are not afraid of the school rules and regulations. They even point out that the school rules and regulations need to be reviewed and new rules should be introduced. The students mentioned that since they are aware of their rights, they know that the existing school rules and regulations are not enough to improve discipline at school. The school administrator averred:



*“We are much concerned with the discipline problems in the school and as the head of the school, I am aware that the existing rules and regulations are not enough to deter students from misbehaviour. At the same time, we have to take into consideration the prevailing laws of the Republic of Mauritius which protect the rights of the students. For this reason, with the collaboration of the PTA, we have come with new rules and regulations which are also being used as strategies to reduce the discipline problems at school; one example is Saturday detention has been extended from two hours’ arrest to half day.”*

The finding is consistent with Mwaniki (2018) which found that rules and regulations promote indiscipline among Kenyan students.

### **5.2.3 The socio-economic status of the family**

The majority of the respondents strongly agreed that poverty was one of the reasons that cause disciplinary problems among students, while 14 respondents which represented 31.1% of the respondents, did not agree about it. It should be noted that teachers, in the age group above 40 years and with a teaching experience of more than 15 years, were among those respondents who did not agree that poverty was a cause of indiscipline in the school. The students interviewed in the focus group did not share the view that poverty is a cause of indiscipline in the school. One student from the FGD justified the situation by stating:

*“Many friends are from poor families, yet they show positive behaviour and perform well in their academic subjects. They do not misbehave in class”*

The school principal shared the same view as the students in the focus group. He maintained:

*“I personally do not think that poverty can be a cause of indiscipline in the school, most of the indiscipline cases emanate from students who come from well off families.”*

This view is not shared by Lewis (1991) and Russouw (2003) who asserted that students from poor families show a lack of discipline. However, Banerjee (2016) reported that deprivation, underachievement and student indiscipline are linked.

### **5.2.4 Acquisition of unwanted information from digital media**

77% of the respondents were of the same view that the acquisition of negative information from audiovisual materials is a cause of indiscipline at school. 20% of the respondents did not agree that negative information from audiovisual can promote disciplinary problems in the school. All the interviewees were of the same view with the respondents of the questionnaire that whenever students acquire negative information from audiovisual materials, they share this information with other friends and encourage them to get involved into misbehaviour. From documents review at the office of the

school usher, it was found that many students had access to negative information in their mobile phones. This finding in the Academy is in consistency with Ahn, Bivona and DiScala (2012) who maintained that K-12 students use social media to bully classmates.

### **5.2.5 Peer group pressure**

Peer group pressure is another cause of indiscipline in the selected Academy. Out of 45 respondents, 17 teachers strongly agreed and another 17 also agreed, which represented 75.6% of the respondents with the same view. Only 6.7% of the respondents strongly disagreed, while 13.3% of the respondents disagreed. Respondents who disagreed were mainly from the age group of 25 to 36, with 6 to 10 years of teaching experience. The participants in the focus group interview also agreed that their friends were influenced by their peer groups to get involved in disciplinary acts, like shirking classes, leaving the school premises without official permission. The school principal also felt that peer groups always have a significant influence on encouraging students to exhibit disciplinary problems. He added:

*“A student on his own will be reluctant to misbehave in school, but in the company of their friends they feel strong and even secured”.*

Belle (2018) reached the same conclusion in his study in Mauritius on indiscipline among state secondary school students who develop a leader-followers' relationship.

## **5.3 Strategies to address disciplinary problems**

### **5.3.1 The School Community Service**

75.6% of the respondents did not agree that the service to school during the Saturday detention improves discipline in the school, while only 22.2% of the educators agreed that the School Community Service would help to improve learner discipline. The opinion of the school principal is consistent only with 22.2% of the respondents. The school principal explained:

*“The community service to school is a new strategy decided by the PTA, where students are given light jobs like cleaning of the schoolyard, brooming the classrooms, and helping the school superintendent in administrative work”.*

The school principal firmly believed that this strategy would help to create a certain sense of responsibility in the students by doing these small jobs. Community service is associated with the restorative approach to discipline, which focuses on righting the wrong and changing a negative behaviour into a positive one (Virginia Department of Education 2005). However, the Virginia's experience of community service to suspended and expelled youth had a significant effect on the development of pro-social behaviour and a reduction in the academic failure but did not have a significant impact on the prevention of indiscipline.

### 5.3.2 Disciplinary cards by teachers

62.2% of the respondents agreed that the use of disciplinary cards by teachers help to improve discipline in the school. However, 33.3% of the respondents totally disagreed. These respondents are those teachers who are from the age group 36 to 65 with a teaching experience of more than 10 years. For these teachers, the disciplinary cards are of no use. They did not have discipline problems in their classrooms due to effective classroom management and long years of teaching experience. The school principal was of the opinion that the disciplinary cards would be helpful to those teachers who have classroom management problems. Therefore, the views of 33.3% of the respondents were consistent with the opinion of the school principal.

### 5.3.3 Educators' engagement in disciplining students

71.1% of the teachers were of the opinion that more commitment on their part will improve discipline in the school while 24.5% of the respondents did not agree. The views of the majority of the respondents are consistent with the findings of Oliver, Wehby and Reschly (2011) that teachers need to change their own attitudes to their participation in the discipline management policy and implementation for successful management of learner indiscipline as a whole school plan. The school principal was also of the same view expressed by the majority of the educators in the questionnaire. Indeed, Belle (2016) and Beebeejaun-Muslum (2014) found that teachers' lack of responsibility to collaborate with the school administration for addressing the behaviour problem of students was a matter of concern in secondary schools in Mauritius.

### 5.3.4 Moral punishment

71.1% of the respondents disagreed that moral punishment improves student discipline in the Academy. However, 27.7% of the respondents believed that moral punishment would improve discipline in the school and 2.2% of the respondents could not give an opinion on this statement. The students were totally against moral punishment. Two respondents in the focus group interview completely disapproved the use of this strategy. They vehemently insisted:

*"Moral punishment is illegal and against human rights."*

When the school principal was interviewed on moral punishment as a means to improve discipline, he categorically disapproved it and justified his position by stating:

*"As a public officer and head of the school, I have to abide by the laws of the country, although moral punishment has its beneficial effects."*

Yet, he recognised the positive effects that such a disciplinary measure might have on the behaviour of students. Therefore, the majority of the sources were against moral punishment as a strategy to improve discipline in the school.

### 5.3.5 Strong leadership by the school administrator

64.4% of the respondents agreed that the school principal generates a strong leadership skill to improve discipline in the school. This finding is consistent with the findings of Mukuria (2002) and Carolyn (2011) who advocated that strong leadership from the school head always help to reduce disciplinary problems in the school environment. Besides, 84.4 % of the respondents agreed that the school principal is always available to support teachers in order to discipline students. Moreover, the school administrator's leadership to motivate parents and the Parents-Teachers' Association to be involved in decision-making about the school discipline policy and implementation is a major determinant of students to manifest indiscipline. From this perspective, the school administrator averred:

*"When parents are involved in the disciplinary committee, students are more conscious and show more positive behaviour in the school".*

However, 33.45% of the respondents did not agree that the involvement of the PTA helped to reduce disciplinary problems in the school. This is due to the political interference of parents in the school discipline management, which prevents the school administrator and teachers to successfully address the problem (Belle, 2016).

## 6. Recommendations

From the findings of this study, it is recommended that the school administration of the Academy should identify the causes of indiscipline in a school. When students get into undesirable behaviour, instead of using 'firefighting' solutions on a day-to-day basis, the school administrator should identify and explore why the students are behaving in such manners. After identifying the causes of indiscipline, it becomes much easier to explore the solutions and thus improve discipline in the school. It is also recommended that even parents should be provided with counselling so that they can be educated and sensitised on the importance of controlling their behaviour and the behaviour of their children at homes and in public places. Without the collaboration of the parents, no school administrator may succeed in improving discipline among the students. Besides, the student council and the prefect body, who are representatives of the students should be fully involved in the decision-making process of the school. This will make the students feel a greater sense of belongingness towards the school. In this way, the decisions taken on discipline and any other matters relating to the students will be accepted or *"bought-in"* by the students because their representatives would have participated actively in the decision-making process. The student council and the prefect body are expected to play an active role to improve discipline in the school. Therefore, the school administrator should provide opportunities for students to develop learner leadership skills.

The protocol for the implementation of discipline strategies in schools in Mauritius is prescribed by the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology

in the Student Behaviour Policy. However, it is obvious from this study that strict and punitive rules and regulations, such as expulsion and detention, do not help in reducing indiscipline. It is recommended that the setting of rules and regulations, as well as any discipline policy-making and implementation, should take into consideration the student voice and choice, and they should be thus decentralised. The school context and profile of students in an Academy are different from a Regional school. Each school is a unique organisation: discipline planning and implementation are context-bound.

It is recommended that a school-wide behaviour management approach should be adopted by the administrator of an Academy, who should work in close collaboration of students, teachers, parents and superintendents, as well as resource persons like an educational psychologist and a social worker. This behaviour management structure may be considered with reference to Belle's Model of Learner Discipline Management (Belle, 2016), which takes into account the Mauritian state secondary school context. It should be noted that discipline is not about modifying the student behaviour, but rather about addressing the behaviour problem, which may have its sources from the family, peer group pressure, the school itself, the digital media, as discussed in this study, as well as biological causes.

Consistent with previous studies on student indiscipline in Mauritius, this study confirms that the punitive or reactive approach to discipline is still being used in schools. Evidence-based research has proved that such traditional or custodial approach is not effective. There should be a shift to the humanistic and democratic approach to discipline, whereby the students are part and parcel of the management of this phenomenon. So, it is obvious that the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology must review its protocol for behaviour management and change its conceptualisation of the problem to take into consideration the student as a human being that needs to develop self-discipline skills and values, not as a criminal who should be punished. No child should be treated as a criminal in the way he/she is treated by the school in addressing socially undesirable behaviour.

## **7. Conclusion**

The objectives of the study were to identify the forms of student indiscipline, examine the causes of student indiscipline and investigate the disciplinary measures that are currently being implemented in the selected Academy. The findings revealed that the school context is the breeding ground for the manifestation of student indiscipline, though studies showed that the behaviour of a child may be influenced by biological factors. Indeed, this problem boils down to the nature-nurture debate. Yet, the Academy has a fundamental role to play as the ideal place to prevent, intervene and restore the behaviour of the students, using positive behaviour management strategies. It is the role of the school administrator to create a school or learning environment that is conducive, healthy and safe to them. This gives rise to the need of creating a school structure that takes into consideration the culture of learning and teaching and making it inclusive,

participatory and cohesive so that every student takes ownership of his/her learning and responsibility of his/her behaviour. For this to happen, the school administrator should be the change agent and triggers the motivation of all its immediate stakeholders to be the driving forces to contribute to transforming the student population with positive behaviour in the Academy.

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